

Bibliotheca Catechetica:
OR, THE
Country Curates Library.
BEING AN
ESSAY

Towards providing all the
Parochial Cures of England,
ENDOW'D
With not above Ten Pounds *per Annum,*
WITH
A Study of Usefull BOOKS of like Value,
TO
Enable the Ministers thereof to Ca-
techise the Youth, and to Instruct the
People in all things necessary to
SALVATION.

By THOMAS BRAY, D. D.

L O N D O N,
Printed for William Hawes, at the Rose in Ludgate-
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THE P R E F A C E.

HAVING made it my Business, so far to enquire into the Real Value of the poorest Parochial Cures of this Kingdom, that I can make a probable Guess, that there are at least 400 Parishes, besides Chapelries, not exceeding Ten, or Fifteen Pound per Annum Maintenance for the Minister. It is hard to say, whether I became most affected with the Unhappiness of the Ministers, or of the People in such Places: For if the former for want of necessary Books must be utterly incapable to make wise unto Salvation such as are committed to their Charge, it is undoubtedly of fatal Consequence to the Latter, that the Shepherds of their Souls should be so miserably provided wherewithal to feed their Flock.

And this is the sole Occasion of the following Address to such as are piously dispos'd, especially if they be Rich, and without Children. Such Persons, Providence seems to have design'd to be publick Benefactors to Mankind; and there is none so Noble, so Compendious, so Immediate, and

(in our present Circumstances) a Method of doing good so much wanted, as that of fixing Libraries of necessary Books for such of the Clergy, as cannot possibly Buy them.

I have for some considerable Time applied the bent of my Thoughts this way, and hope I have happily hit upon another Medium, besides the mere Benefactions of pious Persons, whereby to promote it; which I desire may not be interpreted as the Effect of any fond Opinion of my own Performance, since I solemnly, and sincerely declare, it will be indifferent to me by whose Book it may be any ways accomplished; only being Master of my own, by having kept the Copy unalienated, that so I might the better Devote it to Publick Service, I have presum'd humbly to propose, that whatever may be gain'd by the Sale of it, may be apply'd to that Purpose. I am indeed of the Opinion, that if the Authors so please, many other Books which are of Universal Sale, might be Dedicated to Raise a Fund to carry on the like Design: And those Honourable, Reverend, and Worthy Persons, who in my Absence will be pleased to do me the Favour to manage both the Design it self, and the Methods of promoting it, will, I dare say, improve all such Means, as shall be put into their Hands, to the utmost Advantage thereof. And if I shall understand that what is hereafter propos'd, finds a favourable Reception, both from the Clergy, and School-Masters, who may reasonably be expected to be friends to any Means that will Raise them Libraries, I have something else of like Nature
sprung

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sprung up in my Thoughts since the Printing of this Essay, that will considerably advance it.

As to the Catechetical Libraries themselves, I have kept strictly to the Subject Matter of Catechetical Doctrine in the Structure of them, except it may be thought, that the Expositions on the Holy Scriptures, and the Ministerial Directories, and Lives, may be of something more General Concern. But as it is the more immediate Business of a Catechist to understand the Scriptures, which makes it necessary for him to be sufficiently furnish'd with Books for that Purpose, so he must be equally concern'd with any other of the Clergy in the Conduct of his Life and Studies, which will justify the adding of some few of the Latter Sort of Writers. And of these Catechetical Libraries I have set down three Degrees, proportionably to the Circumstances of three Ranks of the Clergy, who are more immediately concern'd in this Work, and for whose Service they are Design'd.

I. The Lowest, and Last of these Libraries, is that which is first intended, and is such as I wou'd have provided in all the Parochial Cures, not exceeding Ten, or Fifteen Pound per Annum. It is generally apprehended that few or none in such Places are able to make any use of Authors in the Learned Languages; which indeed are such contemptuous Thoughts of them, as they do not deserve. I am Personally acquainted with several very worthy, and good Divines in these slender and unhappy Circumstances, and

and know many of them to be as great Lovers of Books, and as well able to make use of them, as some of those who think so meanly of them. However to comply with the Sentiments of such, who think otherwise, I dare promise in the behalf of these my Brethren, that there's none of them, but would be exceeding thankfull to those who will furnish them with our English Authors.

II. The next Class of these Catechetical Libraries, are such as have a Mixture of Authors in the Learned Languages, such as are generally suppos'd to have written most usefully upon all, or any of the Catechetical Points, and those are such as we could wish to see provided in all those Parishes, where Catechetical Lectures are now setting up for the Instruction, especially of the poorer Children, whose Parents or Friends are unable to put them to School. There are several such Schools now advancing by the wise Consultations, and Charitable Assistance of several Excellent Persons; and 'tis hop'd such may in time be provided in all the Market-Towns at least in this Kingdom. And as all Schools in Christian Countries, ought to be principally Design'd for the Instruction of Youth in the Principles of Christianity, so it is piously provided, that the Children belonging to these Schools, should not only be made to learn their Catechism, but should have it expounded to them publickly once a Week, both for their own and others Edification.

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Now the most proper Person for the Catechist, I humbly conceive, would be the Curate, Assistant, or Reader in such Parishes, not only because the Rector has a larger Field of Business to mind, which will not give him always Leisure to attend every thing, and amongst the Rest, this; but because this Catechising of the Youth, and Expounding publicly, would most effectually train up the Young Clergy for higher Ministeries in the Church. It is well known that docendo ipse discas, so that hereby the Curate of a Parish would become himself so much a Master in the grand Doctrines of Christianity, that after such a Course of Instruction, he might be more safely trusted with the Superior Conduct in a Cure of his own. And it being very difficult for a Curate, out of the Ordinary Allowance, to furnish himself with a sufficient Number of Necessary Books; it is requisite a Catechetical Library should be part of his Encouragement; and as it would be a good Encouragement, so it would be a great Engagement upon him to Discharge this Trust with Fidelity, and Diligence; and would likewise enable him to do it as a Workman who needs not be ashamed.

The Third Class of these Catechetical Libraries is only distinguish'd from the former by having double the Quantity of Books upon the same Heads. And I would here propose, that in such Places where the Rector himself being not Resident, the Care of Souls is wholly committed

mitted to a Curate, that for the better Discharge of his Duty, there were one of those Libraries fix'd to the Place. By this Means the Rector might be better secur'd of a Full, and Regular Instruction given to his People ; for as such a Sett of Books upon all the Parts of Christian Doctrin, would enable the Assistant to give a full Instruction, so the Scheme, and Order in which they are dispos'd, would direct him to make it Regular, and Methodical.

And indeed, if in all Market-Towns, where Catechetical Schools are likely to be set up, there shall be a Catechetical Library given as an Encouragement; and if in all the Cures where the proper Minister does not Reside, and in such as do not exceed Ten, or Fifteen Pounds per Annum, there were such Libraries fix'd, as are here propos'd; this would be a considerable Advance both towards Lending, and Parochial Libraries throughout the Kingdom, than which I know not a greater good I could wish to our Church.

It is exceedingly well, and seasonably advis'd by our most Reverend Primate in his late Circular Letter to the Bishops, and Clergy of his Province, That while our Enemies are so very industrious in seeking out Objections against the Christian Religion; it becomes the Clergy (who are set apart for the Vindication of it) to be no less diligent in their Preparations for its Defence, by acquainting themselves thoroughly

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thoroughly with the Rational Grounds of Christianity, and the True State of such Points, as are the Subject of our present Controversies, together with the Objections which are usually made by our Adversaries of all Sorts, and the effectual Answers that have been Return'd to them, by so many Eminent Writers of our own Church ; that so they may be ready, on all Occasions to do Justice, and Honour to our Holy Religion ; and be able to expose the Folly and Ignorance of these Gain-saying Men. The Cause which God has put into our Hands, is undoubtedly good ; but the best Cause may suffer by the Weakness of its Advocate ; and when this happens in Matters of Religion, it gives the Adversary an Occasion of Triumph, and is apt to stagger the Faith even of sincere, and unprejudic'd Christians.

Nothing more plain than that in a Reading Age, wherein Books are now daily published to propagate the most Impious Principles, and Pestilent Heresies, there is a Necessity for the Clergy to double their Diligence in their Studies, not only that they may be able to Explain, (which is always necessary) but to Defend all the Doctrines of Christianity, to which Service they are all call'd forth at this Time. And if, when so many Sciolists shall so pertly, and arrogantly attacque all the Articles of our most Holy Faith, any of the Clergy, for want of Books, should be dumb or silent on such Occasions,

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sions, Religion it self must undoubtedly extreamly suffer. Some Means therefore must be contriv'd, that all the Clergy may be furnished with such Materials, as may enable them to instruct the People concerning the Faith, and defend them in it from those who would pervert them, and this cannot be done without supplying the Clergy with Parochial, or at leastwise, till so great a good can be accomplish'd, with Deanary, or Lending Libraries.

And now it may be full time to give some Account of what has been already done pursuant to all these Designs, lest I be thought a Meer Projector. This sounds very contemptible with the Wise and Prudent, and the best laid Design in the World then only ceases to be thought a Project, when it does actually succeed. And this I thank God our present Design has already done in all its Parts, and in no considerable Degree as to some of them, considering how little it has been yet made known.

In the Isle of Man by the Means here propos'd, there is a Foundation begun of sixteen Catechetical Libraries in the sixteen poor Parochial Cures of that whole Island and Diocess, and no doubt they will in time be fully perfected by the Pious Endeavours, and Application of my most Excellent Friend the Bishop of that See. Towards what has been hitherto done for the Raising of these Sixteen, the Right Reverend the Bishops of Sarum, Ely, Chichester, and the Reverend Dr. Wake, &c. did bestow some of their own Books, and the most Reverend

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rend the Arch-Bishop of Dublin advanc'd the Remainder by a Demand of 800 of the Baptismal Covenant, according to the Terms propos'd.

In the Mother Catechetical School, viz. at Algate in this City, there is a Library of the Second Class now collecting for the Use of the Catechist, at the Charge of the Impropiator, and some other Benefactors. And in the County of Montgomery, there are four of the like Catechetical Libraries ready to be sent down as a Means to promote Catechising in the four Market-Towns of that County; the which have been Rais'd by the Benefaction of the present Lord Bishop of Worcester, given both to purchase those Libraries, and the Discourses on the Baptismal Covenant. Nor is there a President wanting of one of the larger Libraries given by the Rector of a Parish, the better to enable his Curate to discharge his Trust, and fix'd for the Service of his Successors after him.

And lastly in the Diocess of Chester there is the Foundation of two Lending Libraries laid by the Discourse on the Baptismal Covenant; the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of that See, the Reverend the Arch-Deacon of Chester, and the Reverend Clergy in the Deanary of Namptwich having sent for 800 of those Books with two Ten Pound Libraries according to Proposals.

*And as whatever Quantity of the Discourses on the Baptismal Covenant shall be sent for by any School, or Parish, or by any Pious Person to give a-
way*

way (be the Number 20, 30, 50, 100, &c.) an Account shall be kept of the same, and of all the Profit arising from them, in order to dispose all of it to a Farthing, toward purchasing the Lesser Catechetical Libraries; so if any whole Deanary shall join to take off 400 of the said Books, Ten Pound shall be allowed them, to purchase such Books as the Clergy of that Deanary shall agree upon, wherewith to lay the Foundation of a Lending Library, or to add to the Stock of one already founded.

PROPOSALS

FOR

*The providing Catechetical Libraries in
all such Parochial Cures of this Kingdom,
as are not endow'd with above Ten Pounds
per Annum, for the Use of the Mini-
sters thereof.*

Humbly offer'd to All who are Lovers of the Souls
of those for whom *Christ* Died.

THAT there are such, even in this Fro-
zen Age and Country, and who being
of a Publick Spirit, are not only Able,
but Willing, to do any thing they can
be made sensible will be for a Common Good, is
to be hop'd, or at least-wise to be wish'd. But that
which is the chiefeft of all Goods, the Cultivating the
Minds and Manners of Men with Divine Knowledge,
and Christian Vertues, seems not to be thought of,
however not to be promoted by such proper and im-
mediate Methods as it easily might. Schools and

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Colleges (God be prais'd) we have sufficient to send us out Labourers for the Vineyard; and from thence there come more than enough to supply all the Cures of the Kingdom. But alas, when they are come Abroad, there are scarce one Third of our **Parochial Preferments** which can enable our Clergy to furnish themselves with those necessary helps, whereby they may be serviceable in any tolerable measure to the good of Souls: And yet I find few do cast their Eyes upon this sort of Charity, the raising of Libraries for this End and Purpose.

But whatever others may think of it, to me this seems to be a prime part of **Christian Charity**; and the most wanted too in this Kingdom; And I doubt not, but it will in like manner appear to all others, who will but consider these following Particulars; namely,

I. That as the Soul of Man is Infinitely more valuable than the Body, so that Charity which goes towards the Cultivating the Minds and Manners of Men with Divine Knowledge, and Christian Graces, whereby they may be made *meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*, must needs be of a far more exalted Nature, than that which **Terminates** only upon the welfare of this Mortal **Life**.

II. That

H. That by an exact Scrutiny into the Value of our Livings, it will be found, that there are 400 Parishes, and upwards, in **England, Wales,** and the **Isle of Man**, Endow'd with not above Ten Pounds *per Annum* for the maintenance of a Minister, with which Provision it is utterly Impossible he should furnish himself with Books, whereby he might be able to give those Souls, committed to his Charge, due Instructions in all the *meer Necessaries* to Salvation.

III. It will therefore follow, that those Persons who abound in this World's Goods, and especially whom Providence seems in a more peculiar manner to have design'd to be Publick Benefactors to Mankind, by giving them good Estates, without Heirs to enjoy their Riches; it will therefore follow, I say, that such will approve themselves both to God and Man, most Divinely Charitable, who shall bestow some of the forementioned Libraries for the perpetual Use of the Ministers of such Places, in order to Capacitate them to save the Souls of Men.

IV. As by this means such Charitable Persons will become at a second hand, and in an Inferior degree, as it were, Apostles to the World, by Preaching through the Mouths of these Ministers to the People, and will have a share in all the Conversions

which shall be made in such places to all succeeding Generations; so to induce them thereunto they need no more than to meditate upon those words of the Prophet, *Dan. 12. 3. They that are wise, or, Teachers, as it is in the Original, shall shine as the Brightness of the Firmament, and they that turn many to Righteousness, as the Stars for ever and ever.*

I shall not enlarge on these Particulars, I think they carry their own Evidence along with them, all of them except the second, and a little Insight into the present State of the Clergy, will make that appear to be matter of Fact. And the rest need no Illustration. And now if the Case of the Church in this Nation be really so, I conjure all those who love to see the *Image of God*, Imprinted upon the Souls of Men, to furnish, as our Plantations abroad, so our poor Vicaridges at home, with what may enable us to erase that Ignorance and Barbarity, those Brutish Manners, and Paganish Vices and Customs, which do to this day so hideously deform the greatest part of Mankind. We cannot now work Miracles, nor is Inspiration any part of our Talent; but we are left to the ordinary Means to fit our selves for this great Work of Converting the World; namely, the common measures of God's Holy Spirit, accompanying our hard Study. But how can they Study, who have not Books to read? Those who were never pinch'd with narrow Preferments may not be sensible
of

of this want, because they have been able to furnish themselves sufficiently with Books. But those whose Incomes from the Church never enabl'd them to purchase the fourth part of the Authors they have occasion to peruse, in order to discharge the ordinary Duties of their Ministry, can speak feelingly in this matter.

I know there is nothing a more common Jest than the Poverty, and Ignorance of the Poor Clergy in *Wales*, and the Northern parts of this Kingdom; but this Jest in my Opinion, is the Nations shame, who provide no better for them. And provide them but with Books, and they would be neither Ignorant, Poor, nor Scandalous; not *Ignorant*, for Books do by an immediate Causality remove that Imputation; not so very *Poor* as now, for I have known Good Men, and Lovers of Learning kept under hatches all their life time, chiefly by their being Bookishly given, and indebted to Booksellers: not *Scandalous*, for I know that many whose Immoralities are said to be a Reproach to their Function, who yet in all probability had never become such Men, if they had been possess'd of Good Books, wherewith they might have employ'd their time in reading; for want of which it is, that some perhaps may have sought their Diversion in Ale-houses, and in a Santring way of Life.

But alas! The want of Books is not of the tenth part of that ill. Consequence, as it affects the Minister,

ster, to what it is, as it affects the People. If it
 could only be consider'd as affecting the former, it
 would be but a Private, and *Single Misfortune*; but
 since it cannot but extreamly much affect the latter,
 it is a *Publick Calamity*. For why? *Where the Priests*
Lips cannot preserve, cannot procure Knowledge, how
should the People seek the Law at his Mouth? And alas,
 where Ignorance, and Darkness Universally Reign
 in any part of the World, and the People are desti-
 tute of Divine Knowledge, innumerable are the Mi-
 series, and dreadful are the Sins, which Reign in such
 places; Between Superstition, and Atheism such Peo-
 ple are equally divided; Fornications, and Adulte-
 ries are accounted but common Infirmities by their
 great ones, and Perjuries in the Courts of Judica-
 ture are part of the Services they exact of their In-
 feriors: And to be Sons of Violence is common to
 all. For as was seen in our former Ages of Igno-
 rance in this Nation, and is still the Constitution of
 Barbarous Countries elsewhere, the Great Ones
 with their Followers are no better than Publick Rob-
 bers, ever and anon making Ravages upon some
 Neighbouring Petty Lord, and his Vassals, and all of
 them a sort of tollerated Banditty continually Prey-
 ing, and being Prey'd upon by each other. Such, and
 many others are the Violations of Just and Right,
 of God's Laws, yea and of the very Laws of Na-
 ture, which arise from this bitter Fountain of Igno-
 rance

rance of the true Nature of God, and of Religion ; whereas on the other side, unspeakable are the Benefits consisting in Justice, Mercy and Peace ; in Piety towards God, and well ordered Affections as to our selves, where, by means of an Intelligent, Pious, and Industrious Clergy (those great *Benefactors* to Mankind) the People are thoroughly enlightened with the Knowledge of God, and the true Nature of *Pure and Undeiled Religion*, as it is in *James* 1. 27.

I say, of *Pure and Undeiled Religion*, a Religion that is unmixed with the Alloys of meer Systematical, and Precarious Tenets on the one hand, or Superstitious, and Idolatrous Usages on the other. And such is the Constitution, as near as can be, of this little Catalogue, which follows. It is Compos'd of such Pious Mens Works, who have Imbib'd their Principles from our Church Catechism, and in writing consonantly to that, I am sure they cannot Err either to the Right, or to the Left in Religion. And because I would rather desire to see such Libraries fixt in those Poor places for which I am so Zealous, than any one Good I can wish for the Church, I have made up the Catalogue of such Books for the most part, as have their Authors now living, or are at leastwise most easily acquirable, being Common, and in our English Tongue.

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And since I have assum'd to my self to be an Advocate in the behalf of my Poor Brethren, and their respective Flocks ; let me intreat such of our *Dignify'd Authors*; who have written so Piously, and Devotionally, to exemplifie the sincerity of that Spirit, which does appear in their Writings, by bestowing of their Books to the purposes for which I here Solicite them. And also I do earnestly request our Richer Citizens, who by many, and repeated Providential Hitts have been advanced to great Fortunes ; and do therefore peculiarly owe grateful Returns to God, to think upon this of Bestowing Little Libraries Instructive in the Essentials of Christianity, as the most Natural, and Adapted way whereby they can testifie such their Gratitude. But above all, I must desire those, “ Whom Providence, as I said before, “ seems in a more peculiar manner to have design'd “ to be Publick Benefactors to Mankind, by giving “ them good Estates without Heirs to enjoy their “ Riches ; particularly I desire them to consider this matter, and that by this means they would make to themselves *Friends in Heaven of the Mammon of Unrighteousness*, rather than like *David's Fool*, heap to themselves Riches, not knowing who shall gather them. And that instead of being foolishly Solicitous to find out some one, from whom they might call their Lands after their own Name (fondly thinking that by this means, their Houses shall continue for ever, and their Dwelling-

Dwelling-places to all Generations) that they would rather by such Charity to the Souls of Men, as is here propos'd, provide that *their Names may be written in the Book of Life*, thence never to be obliterated. And indeed I must not pass by any of those, whose ample Fortunes shall enable them, or Pious Souls shall encline them to imitate their Great Master in doing good, without minding them of the Excellency and Usefulness of this sort of Charity.

Now our Ancient **Founders of Colleges**, those Brave, Large, and Elevated Souls! Generally express'd their peculiar Tenderness to their Native Country, or to those places of abode, to which they owed most, by qualifying Persons of such Diocesses, or Counties respectfully, for the benefit of their Foundations. And the same Method of Charity I shall here adventure to recommend to those, I do now Address. Let such whose Conditions shall enable them to bestow one, two, or more of these *Diminutive Libraries*, cast their Pitying Eyes upon those *Ten Pound Curacies*, whether Parishes or Chapelries, near unto them, and extend their Benefactions in this way to as many of them, as their Circumstances shall enable them. But as for those whose Worldly Acquisitions are very great, and can render themselves a Blessing to whole Provinces; let them look towards **Wales**, the **Isle of Man**, and
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other Northern parts of this Kingdom. And indeed it is matter of sad Consideration, to see how Barbarous, and Ignorant those places now mentioned, do still remain, notwithstanding that the Gospel shines in other parts of the Nation with a Meridian Brightness; the reason is the small Provision made for its Encouragement in those Parts, whereas in all reason the greatest Encouragement ought to be given there, where Nature is most unkind, and uninviting, to Ballance the Inconveniencies thereof. And I am verily perswaded, that if Books were fixt in those parts, as ungrateful as is the Climate, Men of Worth would follow them, it being natural for Persons who are Lovers of Knowledge and Religion, to value all Places alike where Religion and Learning do flourish.

Nor let any be discouraged from bestowing these Books, out of fear they should be Imbezel'd, Lost, or Converted to a Private Use, for there may be sufficient Care taken to secure them through all the Succession of Ministers in such Places; 1st. By Lettering them on the Covers to what Parish they belong. 2^{dly}, By making Registers of them to be left with the Bishop, and his Arch-Deacons, in whose Jurisdictions such Places shall happen to be. And 3^{dly}, By the Yearly Visitation of the Arch-Deacon, or of such of the Clergy whom he shall Depute to see that they be
not

not Imbezel'd, Lost, or Spoil'd. After all these Precautions, there seems no place for the least fear they should ever be Lost. But if they should be any-wise Alienated, by the meer Lettering of them, they may as easily be discovered, and own'd, as any Living Creature by its Ear-mark.

And now I only desire such to whom I Apply, to consider, how Comfortable, how Joyful it will be to those Pious and Charitable Persons we have already found upon this occasion; and to those who shall add themselves to the number; I desire such to consider what a Jubile it will be to them, when the Judge of all the World shall sit upon his August Tribunal, surrounded with Angels; and when the Register of all Mens Actions shall be open'd, to hear the Record of this their Love to God, and Piety to the Souls of Men publicly read, Angels and Saints applauding them.

And indeed if any are Piously Ambitious of the Higheft Stations in the Kingdom of Glory, of becoming Courtiers and Favourites to the King of kings; it is Professedly and Sincerely my Opinion, that next to what the Apostles did to Evangelize the World, such Charities as these, which have the most, Immediate, and direct Tendency to Convert Mankind to God, will be the most ready way to Recommend, and Qualifie a Pious Soul for such a Dignity::

Dignity: And I think I have the Authority of an
Infallible Testimony for what I say, for which rea-
son I must again repeat it, *They that are wise, or
Teachers, shall shine as the Brightness of the Firma-
ment, and they that turn many to Righteousness, as the
Stars for ever and ever.*

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Bibliotheca Catechetica Major :

O R, A

Catalogue of Books

Fitted to the

Condition and Business

O F A

Country Curate;

A N D

Dispos'd into that Order, in which, if
an Initiate in Theology, he may
most profitably Read them.

- I. **S**criptures and Concurrent History, Commen-
tators and Concordances.

First, *The Holy Scriptures.*

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The Holy Bible with Dr. *Scattergood's* References : Or,
 The H. Bible with *Clark's* References, *Fol.*
 Novum Testamentum Græcum, *Oxon.* Var. Lect. Or
 Novum Testam. Græcum Var. Lect. *Curcellæi, Amstel.*
 1698 N°.

Secondly, *Concurrent Hist. Scripture Chronology, and Geography.*

Helvicus's Chronological Tables, *Fol.* Or
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 A Map of the Holy Land in *Josephus.* Or
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I. Upon the whole Bible.

Heideggeri Enchiridion Biblicum Analyfi Generali singulorum Vet. & N. Test. Librorum, & Capitum Argumento unice inserviens. Or

Clark's Analytical Surveigh of the Holy Bible, containing a Division of every Book and Chapter, thereby shewing the Frame and Contexture of the Whole, much conducing to the clear Understanding thereof, *Fol.*

Matthæi Poli Synopsis Criticorum 5 Vol. *Fol.* Or
Pole's English Annotations, 2 Vol. *Fol.*

II. Upon the more Momentous parts of H. Writ.

1. Upon the Pentateuch.

- Bp. *Patrick's* Commentary upon *Genesis*, 4°.
Commentary upon *Exodus*, 4°.
Upon *Leviticus*, 4°.
Upon *Numbers*, 4°.
Commentary upon *Deuteronomy* when publish'd, which compleats the Pentateuch.

2. Upon the *Hagiographi*.

- Bp. *Patrick's* Paraphrases on *Job*, 8°.
Upon *Psalms*, 8°.
Upon *Proverbs*, 8°.
Upon *Ecclesiastes*, 8°.
Upon *Canticles*, 8°.

3. Upon the New Testament.

- Dr. *Hammond's* Paraphrase and Annotations upon the New Testament, *Fol.*
Oxford Paraphrase on *St. Paul's* Epistles, 8°.

Fourthly, *Concordances*, serving for the more skilfull and ready Application of Scripture according to various Occasions.

I. For things.

- Petri Ravanelli Bibliotheca cum Au&tuario* 3 Vol. *Fol.*
Glaffi Philologia Sacra Vet. & Nov. Test. de Stylo, & Rhetoricâ Sacræ Scripturæ, Amstel. 1694. 4°.
Word of God the Best Guide to all Persons ; being a Collection of Scripture Texts, shewing such things as are necessary for every Christian's Knowledge and Practice, 8°.

II. For Words.

The *Cambridge Concordance*, Fol.

Fifthly, *For the more Profitable Reading of the Holy Scriptures.*

Bp. *Patrick's Search the Scriptures*: Or, a Treatise shewing that all Christians ought to read the Holy Scriptures, with Directions to them therein:

Lively Oracles given to us: Or, the Christian's Birth-right and Duty in the Custody and Use of the Holy Scriptures.

II. Catechetical Bodies of Divinity.

First, *Confessions of National Reform'd Churches.*

Corpus Confessionum Fidei quæ diversis Regnis & Nationibus, Ecclesiarum Nomine fuerunt authenticè Editæ; in celeberrimis conventibus exhibitæ, publicaq; Autoritate comprobata, 4°.

Acta Synodi Nationalis Dordracheti, 4°.

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MEANS

For Providing the

Foregoing LIBRARIES

Humbly Offered

To the Reverend and Learned, both Parochial Clergy and School-Masters of this KINGDOM.

HAVING been long a Parochial Minister, and in one of the Meanest Cures of the Church, I am so thoroughly touch'd with a Sense of my Brethrens Condition, especially with respect to their want of Books, that I have even ventur'd to be thought, and call'd a *Projector*, (a very mean and contemptible Character with such as are accounted Men of Wisdom) upon the account of those Designs I am continually forming, to provide them, of what I think so very necessary for all Men of our Sacred Calling to be furnish'd withal.

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And

And to this purpose it is, that I have address'd myself to such as are *Piously*, as well as *Charitably* given, in the foregoing Essay.

But being made sensible by a long Trial and Experience, that but very few of those who are *Charitably* given, are *Piously* so, there being scarcely One in an Hundred of those, who are accounted Liberal, who has Elevation of Mind enough to consider the Wants which affect any thing above the *mean Animal Life*; I have little hopes of much Success by applying that way, tho' something is doing, and will be obtain'd from particular Persons towards the forwarding the Design of furnishing all the Ten Pound Cures of the Kingdom with a Catechetical Library.

Well then, my Learned and most Esteemed Friends, give me leave to tell you, my greatest Expectations is from you, that you will favour a Proposal I am about to make, which, as it is in your Power to give Success to, so I humbly conceive, is a Means in a manner sufficient of it self, to provide the foregoing Libraries, *And of such a Nature as is a most great and considerable good in it self; abstracting from the End it serves; nay, and will be as Immediately Serviceable to the good of Souls, as the End it self will be, which is to be accomplished by it; and is such withal as cannot properly be said to be a Charge to any.* In order to make which appear, I will crave your Patience to enlarge a little upon each Particular.

I. As

I. As to the End I do hereby aim at, viz. a **Catechetical Library** for our poor Parochial Clergy; there are some Reasons for this Provision, which would hold good at all times, and there are others which render them more especially necessary in the Age we now live in. Of the former sort this may be one, That as the Temporal State of those Clergy must be exceeding uncomfortable, where the Endowments of their Places scarcely exceed Ten, or Fifteen Pound *per Annum*; so must the Spiritual Welfare of the People be but miserably provided for in such places; it being impossible that the Ministers under such mean Circumstances should ever be able to furnish themselves with necessary Books: And it being equally inconceivable, that without the help of good Books, whereby they may be instructed in Christianity themselves, they should be ever able to teach others. Amongst those Reasons which make this Provision more necessary now than heretofore, this deserves our serious Consideration, that since the prodigious growth of *Atheism*, *Deism*, *Socinianism* and *Quakerism*, all Veneration to our Character is wore off, few considering us as Authoriz'd by God, to transact Matters of the greatest moment betwixt Him and Man; namely, to ratify by Sacraments the Covenant of Grace in his behalf, to proclaim his Laws, and to bless the People in his Name: The Notions, I say, of these distinguishing Characters have but a small Impression in most Mens

Minds; and generally a Person in H. Orders is now no otherwise valued beyond a meer Layman, than as he appears better fraught with useful Knowledge himself, and better skill'd to communicate it to others. And if so, the poorer Clergy, without such Provision as I am soliciting for them, must needs fall into the lowest Contempt (and the whole Body on their account) now that every Mechanick pretends to Letters, and what is worse, since the Liberty of the Press, that the Laity of all Ranks do freely read the most poisonous Authors. So that I hope, it does sufficiently appear, that it is an End worthy some Thought, Pains and Charges, to provide all the Parochial Cures of Ten or Fifteen Pound a Year with a Catechetical Library, consisting of some of the most plain and practical Books, both upon the General Doctrine of our *Baptismal Covenant*, and upon all the Articles, Terms and Conditions of it, as they are taught in our *Church-Catechism*.

II. And as the End I am now in pursuit of, has the most immediate Tendency both to the good of Souls, and the preservation of our H. Order from the Contempt to which Ignorance will expose us: So one of those Mediums I would propose in order to attain it, will appear, I hope, to be of *such a Nature, as to be as immediately serviceable to the good of Souls, as the End it self, which is to be accomplish'd by it.*

Now the Means I would propose to this End, is the Reception of some Book in the Schools of this Kingdom,

Kingdom, giving a full Institution in the Christian Religion, which I humbly conceive is best done by a Tract upon the Doctrine of the Covenant of Grace: And a Recommendation also of the same by the Parochial Clergy to the Youth in their respective Parishes.

The Reasons why I propose a Book upon the Subject of our Baptismal Covenant, as a most proper Christian Institution for Youth; are as follows.

First, Because I take the Covenant of Grace, or our Baptismal Covenant, to comprize the whole Doctrine of Christianity; even all that, than which no Man, as a meer Christian is necessitated to know more, and than which the meanest ought not to know less.

Secondly, But more especially, with Relation to Youth, because it is more particularly necessary, that all Youth should be Instructed in, and comprehend the general Nature, Terms, and Conditions of their Baptismal Covenant before they go to be **Confirm'd**; which *Apostolical Institution*, as it is of vast consequence to have it duly administred, so in a more peculiar manner, it is requisite that all our School-Youth, when they are come to years of Discretion, and just before they are entring into the World, should both Recognize the Covenant they made with God in their Infancy, and Receive the *Episcopal Benediction*: To do both which rightly and duly, what more requisite, than, that they should be Instructed in the Covenant, which they are to *confirm* accordingly.

1st. I would therefore humbly propose, That the Learned School-Masters of this Kindom would Recommend to the Youth of their respective Schools, a Book on this Subject, which they should make as much necessary for them to be provided withal, as their *Grammar*, their *Dictionary*, or any other Elements of Learning, of far less consequence to the Childrens Happiness both present and future. And that they would enjoin their Scholars to read some part of such an Exposition every *Sunday* and *Holy-day*, in order to render a good account thereof the next Morning.

And if the small Piece which accompanies this, still'd, **A short Discourse on the Doctrine of our Baptismal Covenant**, may be thought proper for this purpose, I can propose by the Sale of so many, as may be taken off by all the Schools in *England*, and that at a lower rate than they are commonly sold by the Bookellers, to raise 100 of the Lesser Catechetical Libraries for the Use of our poor Parochial Clergy. Which I thus compute;

1. I presume there are 40000 Boys in all the Schools of *England* and *Wales*, who learn Latin in order to fit them for the Universities, Trade, and other Business; in which Computation, should I exceed, the continual Succession of Youth into Schools will in few Years make it out.

2. If 40000 of our Youth shall purchase these Books at 1 s. 6 d. per Book, 6 d. per Book may be clear

clear gain, which will make up 1000*l*. towards purchasing these 400 Ten Pound Libraries.

2^{dly}, I would also with all Submission, propose it to the Reverend, the *Parochial Clergy*, that they would please in like manner to recommend the same Book to such of the Youth of their respective Parishes as are grown up to those Years, that render them, if otherwise Qualify'd, fit to be *Confirm'd*; as also to be admitted to the Holy Sacrament. In either case they ought very well to be Instructed in the Nature, Terms, and Conditions of their *Baptismal Covenant*; and if the Youth in each Parish should be provided of the Book here propos'd to this purpose, what will be wanting from those in Schools, will be made up from these in Families, towards purchasing all the 400*l*. *Catechetical Libraries* which are so passionately desir'd.

And now I hope by this time it may appear, that the Means herein propos'd, for the purchasing of our *Catechetical Libraries*, is of such a Nature, as to be a most great and considerable good in it self, abstracting from the End it serves, and to be as immediately conducive to the good of Souls, as the End will be which is to be accomplish'd by it.

Nor III. and Lastly, can that which is here propos'd, be properly said to be a Charge to any, because every Purchaser has here a Book at an under price for his Money. There are not many of that Generosity,

as merely to give, though to advance the most Publick and Useful Design; and what they bestow does generally come with such Difficulty from them, as not to be obtain'd without so much Application, as will require a Person should have little else to do, than to sollicite that one thing amongst them; and when all is done, will scarcely be equivalent to the Time, Monies, and Charges in solliciting: But the way here propos'd, seems to be both Easie and Grateful; *Easie*, because few grudge their Penny, if they have their Penny-worth: And *Grateful*, because it is to be presum'd, there is scarce that Parent so bad himself, who will not be very well pleas'd his Child should be Princip'l'd in Religion, as well as Learning; and will not thank the School-Master or Minister who puts him upon buying a Catechetical Exposition wherein to instruct him.

And now, if our foremention'd Design can be compass'd by such a Medium, as is a Great, and Considerable Good in it self, abstracting from the End it serves; nay, and will be as immediately serviceable to the Good of Souls, as the End it self will be, which is to be accomplish'd by it, and is withall such, as cannot be properly said to be a Charge to any: Upon these Considerations it is hop'd, there may be reason to expect the Concurrence and Assistance of both those Learned Professions of Men, who are best able to judge of the Value of Christian Knowledge,

ledge, and in whose Power it is to encourage the Means here proposed to promote it.

Well, and if so great, and Accumulative a good may be compass'd, and that too without any Man's Change, and that solely by your Means; give me leave to apply my self, to each of you, more particularly in this Affair; but with all Deference to your better Judgments. And in the

First place, I desire the Learned School-Masters of this Kingdom would please to consider, that the very Original and Chief Design of Schools within the Christian Pale, is to instruct Youth in the Principles of Christianity, and to imbue them with Humane Literature, in order only, and in subserviency to that End; according to which Original Institution, one of the Great Schools in our Chief City does still bear in the Frontispiece of its Buildings, *Schola Catechizationis in Christiana Religione*. And pursuant to the same Design of their Foundation, the 29th Canon does strictly enjoyn all School-Masters to Catechise their Scholars.

Secondly, Whereas there never was so great a Growth of Deism, and Infidelity as now, it may be worthy your Reflection, whether to have the Youth of the most sprightly Parts instructed in no other Theology than what they learn from the Greek and Latin Poets, may not have a dangerous Tendency to such cursed Opinions, and to a Disrelish of Christian Doctrines.

Both which consider'd, I could wish that every one of your most useful Profession would please to make it a main Part of his Care, thoroughly to principle his Scholars in the *Doctrines* of the Christian Religion by a weekly catechising of them: I say, in the *Doctrines* of Christianity; for all *Moral Duties* are so much the Dictates of Natural Reason, that half the Pains is not necessary to make Men understand Christian *Ethicks*, as *Christian Principles*; which being, many of them, so much above meer Natural Reason, they must be often inculcated, ere they can be duly apprehended. And besides, till these Principles, which are the grand Motives, and most forcible Reasons to a Holy Life, have obtain'd their due Force in our Minds, by being competently understood and believ'd, Morality will advance but poorly, as the Watch moves slowly whose Spring is weak: But especially it is to be consider'd, that the strictest Morals acted upon other than Christian Principles will find no Acceptance with God.

Reverend and Learned Sirs, It may be in no Case more proper to know your own Power than in this; and that, as it is in a manner absolutely in your own Breasts to appoint what Books your Scholars must have; so there is scarcely that Parent so bad himself, who will not be very well pleased, that his Child should be princip'd in Religion, as well as Learning; and who will not thank the School Master, who

puts

puts him upon buying a *Catechetical Exposition* where
 to instruct him.

And why, I would fain know, should not Parents
 think it as material a Part of the School-Master's Du-
 ty to give the Youth committed to his Charge, a
 through and perfect Understanding of the Elements
 of Christianity, as of *Grammar*. Both their own, and
 the Publick Happiness, I am sure, depends infinitely
 more on the one, than the other. I know, indeed,
 in such a laborious Employment as a School-Masters
 is, the whole Week round, he can find but little Lei-
 sure to compose Discourses, and Explications of his
 own, to give them upon those Heads; and therefore
 till some better shall be provided, for the purpose, I
 do humbly offer the *Exposition* here recommended,
 divided into Lectures; one of which, if all the Youth
 in Schools were enjoyn'd to read every Sunday, and
 an Account were demanded of them what they have
 so read, every Monday-Morning, as duly as they are
 made to say a part in their *Grammar*, I hope it would
 tend something to their Edification, and moreover,
 wou'd have this good Effect, that it would provide
 a proper Employment for the School-Boys on the
 Lord's Day, and would inure them to such a Religi-
 ous Way of spending it, as will influence their Lives
 ever after.

And indeed, upon the whole, though none others
 of our Youth, besides those in *Schools* could be brought

under such a Catechetical Instruction, yet hence we may reasonably hope for a much better Generation of Men the next Age, than we have the Comfort to see at present, because the greatest, or, at least the most considerable part of Youth in all Christian Nations do pass into the World through the Door of School-Discipline.

Secondly, But since many of our Youth, as well the Sons and Daughters, as the Servants in Families, have not had much of School-Education; and since the Instruction of all Sorts of Youth in the Principles of Christianity, is of such Infinite Consequence, not only to their own private Happiness, but also to the publick Welfare of Church and State; give me leave my Reverend Brethren, to address my self also to you, who are the *Parochial Clergy*, to whom I crave leave with all Deference and Submission, to offer, as a Reason for the Entertainment of the foregoing Proposal, what Method in my Opinion we had best to take in Order to instill into the Minds of Youth, a due Understanding of the Principles of Christianity.

And in order to that, I humbly conceive, there may be a double Course of *Catechetical Instruction* which it would be requisite all Youth should be oblig'd to go through.

The First is that usual and common Method in publick, wherein they render an Account of their Religion to the Minister of the Parish, in the Words of
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the *Church Catechism*; and are usually requir'd to prove each Point by Texts of Scripture; for which Purpose Bp. *William's*, or Dr. *Ifham's* Exposition with Scripture-proofs, are of Excellent Use. And those Persons can never answer it to God, and the Souls of their Children, Apprentices, and Servants, who do not encourage, and oblige them constantly to attend this Method of Instruction, and that till they are at least Ten, or Twelve Years of Age.

Secondly, But after this, I think it would be of mighty Consequence, if all the Youth of the Nation were put upon another *Course of Catechetical Instruction*, suitable to more grown Years; and that is, to read some larger Expositions, and Discourses upon the same *Catechetical* Points; more especially upon the Doctrine of their Baptismal Covenant, in order to fit them for *Confirmation* of the same, where it may be possible to enjoy the Benefit of that Ordinance; or if it cannot be had, for a worthy Participation of the Lord's Supper.

Confirmation is undoubtedly an Institution extremely well suited in the Nature of it, to impress serious and lasting Resolutions upon the Hearts of those, who come duly prepar'd to it by a thorough Understanding of its Nature and Design, and of their own Obligations resulting from the Use thereof. But yet though a positive Institution, it operates in rational Ways, and does not profit those, who come not

to it with a due Knowledge, both of that Covenant they do thereby Ratifie, and of the Additional Tyes upon them from so solemn a Recognition ; as also of the Benefits may be expected by the *Episcopal Benediction*. And the same may be said of the Lord's Supper. In order therefore to instill these Notions into the Minds of Youth, there ought to be a very particular Application by all those, who have taken upon them the Care of Souls, to prepare, and to instruct them in order to both those Ordinances. And when they are invited with great Significations of a Fatherly Care and Concern for their Eternal Interest, to receive Instructions in those Matters, just at an Age they are launching out into the World, and before they are corrupted by wicked Principles, and bad Company, it is the likeliest Method to secure them ever after from that Apostacy from God, which the far greatest part of Mankind do now fall into. For which Reason it would be the greatest Charity in the World, and that which would give us the Satisfaction of the greatest Success, would every *Parochial Minister* invite, and encourage the young People of his Parish to come to him after Evening-Prayer is over, to be more particularly instructed by him their Pastor, in what does in a more especial manner concern them. And if the Religious Conference between them were begun, and clos'd up with singing of a Psalm of the New Version, and as set to some of the best Tunes ;

Tunes; This (from Experience I can affirm it) would quickly draw in the whole Youth of the Parish, scarcely one excepted.

And indeed if the Youth of every Parish from the Age of 15 to 25, would every *Sunday* after the Congregation is dismiss'd, come to the Minister thereof in the Vestry or the Chancel of the Church, and there render him an account of what they have been directed by him to read, and prepare themselves to answer his Examinations upon the Points which they have been reading the Week, or Lord's-Day preceding; I do not know what would tend more to their Edification than this. It would lay a sort of Obligation upon them, to read considerable proportions every *Sunday* at least, and so would inure them to a right spending of that Day. It would be a means to fix their attention in their Reading. It would give each Minister an opportunity to acquaint himself with the Proficiency of the Youth of his Parish in Knowledge and Vertue; and according as he finds them Proficients in both, he might invite them to an early engagement of themselves to God; first, in *Confirmation*, and afterwards at the Sacrament of the *Lord's Supper*. Such a Set of Youth would be a *Religious Society* in every Parish under the Care, Conduct and Direction of their proper Pastor, against which at least, no Shadow of Objection can lie. And lastly, such an instance of *Pastoral Care* would wonderfully en-
dear:

dear the Minister and his People to each other, than which nothing will be more for their Benefit, and his Comfort.

It is sad, to see how universally backward our Youth are, when grown up, to come to be Catechis'd, as if it were too childish an Institution, and below them to be seen at it. The consequence of which is, That they never become sufficiently grounded in Christianity; and are let loose to follow their own vicious Inclinations, without the restraint of Christian Principles, when the Efforts of corrupt Nature are most strong and boisterous within them, and when evil company do most haunt them. But since it is so, that perswade them what we can, they will scarcely be brought to submit themselves to the ordinary Catechising among Children, it will be necessary that we provide for their safety by some other method. And this more manly way of Instruction here propos'd, being more adapted to their Age, and being a kind of *Conference* with them, I dare say, would be very taking with all of them. And they would become thereby so thoroughly season'd, and perfected in Religious Principles, that there would be little danger of their miscarriage ever after.

And this way of putting them to frame answers themselves out of what they shall read, will, I conceive, be much more *easy* and *profitable*, than to oblige them to get the answers by heart which are form'd
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for them by others. *More easie*, for not one in a hundred has Leisure, or Memory sufficient to get any thing considerable without Book, which is the reason so few can be brought to make use of those many Expositions which have been made by way of Question and Answer; whereas once or twice reading a short Discourse with attention, will enable any Youth of tolerable Apprehensions, to offer at so much towards an Answer, as to satisfy the Catechist, that he understands what he has read.

And *more Profitable* this method will appear to be, because it puts the *Catechumen* upon forming a Judgment himself upon what he reads; whereas the bare repeating of an Answer made to his hands, will render him little wiser than the Parrot which is taught to utter words she understands not.

And then if moreover after this, we shall our selves deliver to them an Exposition more expatiated, and enlarged, upon the point on which they have been reading before, but to the very same purpose, only more copiously explaining the Doctrine, this will let yet a clearer light into their understandings, of those Divine Truths. And by this way of giving them *Line upon Line, and Precept upon Precept*, they will, at length arrive to a full comprehension of those Sacred Truths; upon the understanding the importance of which, their Salvation does so much depend.

But besides the advantages in this method of infusing Christian Knowledge into the Minds of Youth, to a degree as would render them, I am perswaded, much above the attainments of many, who are advanced far beyond them in years; A Minister, by having gain'd to this purpose a select Society of the Youth of his Parish, giving themselves up to the more close Instructions of him, their proper Pastor; he would hereby have a fair opportunity given him, to instruct them also in the Use, and Reason of all the Parts, and Devotions in their Common Prayers; than which I do not know any part of Instructions more wanted at this day amongst the Common People.

For why? Of all the parts of Religion, there is none does so immediately and directly point towards God, as *Publick Worship*; and in the due performance of which the *Glory of God* is so much concern'd. This is that Homage the Creature pays to his Creator. And when it is solemnly, and awfully perform'd, God is Glorify'd in the Eyes of Men; than which, what can be more reasonable, and necessary? But now if we cast our Eyes upon the sottish, stupid, and unconcern'd Behaviour of the greatest part of People in Country Congregations, they do not only most shamefully sit down all the time of Prayer, but for any appearance of Devotion we can perceive, are as little concern'd at the Divine Offices then perform'd,

as the Stones they tread on, to the exceeding great Offence and Disturbance of all Pious and Devout Minds. But this scandalous Blemish in *Publick Assemblies*, I can speak it by experience, would be soon remov'd, should every Minister have a choice *Society* of twenty or thirty young Disciples in his Parish, well instructed, as in the Principles of Christianity, so in the use of their *Common-Prayer-Book*; for this little *Leaven* would soon season the *whole Lump*. And the whole Congregation would be so far reduc'd by the Solemnity and Regularity of those Persons Devotions, as at least-wise not to affront God as they do, in the service they pretend to pay him; but would indeed be quickn'd by that Life there is in our Offices, when the Responses are *solemnly*, and universally made by the people, so as they would begin to feel some sparks of Devotion glowing in their own Breasts, deriv'd from the Neighbouring Flame so ardently burning in the hearts of others. And indeed the Minister, who shall be able to form out of the Youth of his Parish, such a *Society* as we are now speaking of, need never want company at a Monthly, or at more frequent Sacraments. He would also have a number of excellent Spirits dispers'd amongst the several Families of his Parish, by whom he might easily revive *Family-Devotion*, so universally and shamefully now neglected and disus'd; these being, as it were, his *Lay-Assistants* to perform that part of Religion therein, according

to his directions. Not to say, that so many serious persons being so sensibly benefited by his Instructions, and the pains he has taken with them, will be upon all occasions his Advocates against the Obloquies and Derractions of those, who are always upon the wicked Topick of reviling the Clergy for their Office-sake.

Thus out of an earnest zeal to have the *Parochial Clergy* unanimously joyn in forming a sort of *Religious Societies*, out of all the Youth in their respective Cures, as the only means, I know, together with a Christian Institution in Schools, to save the next Generation, I have run out perhaps into too great a Length.

But I hope not impertinently; for in truth, if both *Parochial Ministers*, and *School-Masters* shall unanimously joyn, first in training up the Youth under their respective Charges in the Principles of Christianity, and shall then take the next opportunity of an *Episcopal Visitation*, to bring them to be *Confirm'd*: This timely Instruction, and this early and solemn Engagement to God of Persons in their Youth; Of Persons, I say, well instructed in the Nature and Importance of their *Baptismal Covenant*, will, by the Divine Blessing secure so considerable a number of Persons, and many of them of the best Capacities, and Education, to the service of their Creator, as will in time outnumber the Sons of Darkness, and stoutly repel the strong Efforts of Satan's Kingdom. In

In short, First, I am afraid it is too certain and too known a Truth; namely, that scarce any Age heretofore can equal the Impiety of the present. There have been indeed horrid Immoralities known in every Age; but in this the very fundamental Principles of all Religion, both natural and reveal'd, are attack'd; and overborn by the Confederate Forces of Atheists, Deists, and Socinians.

Secondly, The great Cause of Looseness in Principles and Manners, is universally acknowledged to have been owing to the want of Catechetical Instructions in Schools, Families and Churches; through which neglect, the present Generation of men having been never well grounded in their Religion, are become an easie prey to *Atheists* and *Hereticks*.

Thirdly, The only way therefore to train up a better Generation of men for the next Age, and thereby to avert the Judgments of Heaven from pouring down upon us, is universally in all Families, Schools, and Churches, to revive that ancient and necessary method of Instruction, viz. *Catechetical Doctrine*.

Fourthly, And I take it, that there is not a more fundamental part of *Catechetical Doctrine*, and more principally requisite to have the Minds of all Youth, both in Schools and Families, prepossess'd withal, than that wherein is deliver'd and explain'd, the general Nature of the Covenant of Grace; that Covenant we enter'd into with God in our Baptism: Because,

First,

First, In this Covenant are included all the Articles between God and Man; and consequently the Summ and Substance of the Christian Religion.

Secondly, Because a general view of the whole Body of Christianity being in a most natural and regular method deliver'd in the Doctrine of our Baptismal Covenant, those who shall be so instructed, will be able to Refer to their proper heads every Discourse they shall hereafter read, or hear, on any particular point, to the avoiding of confusion in their apprehensions of Divine Truths.

Thirdly, And by this means, seeing at once the noble end of Christianity, and with what infinite Wisdom all the parts of it are adapted thereto; they will be able, without farther Reading, to discern the reasonableness of the Christian Religion, to the preventing of all Infusions of Atheism and Deism. And,

Lastly, The general Doctrine of the Covenant of Grace, will be also of singular advantage to all Novices; especially at this time, to be prepossess'd withal, as it is an excellent Antidote against the two prevailing Heresies of this Age, *Socinianism* on the one hand, and *Antinomianism* on the other; the one the Heresie of the Higher, the other of the more vulgar sort of men; a true state of the Covenant of Grace being alone sufficient to obviate, or overthrow, and that without disputing the wretched Principles of both.

It is requisite indeed our Youth should not stop in the general Knowledge of the Nature, Terms, and Conditions of their Baptismal Covenant, but that they shou'd proceed hereafter to a more thorough Understanding of each particular Article both of Faith and Practice : But regularly they ought first to know the General Scheme of Christianity, and the Knowledge of this may be sufficient to fit them for Confirmation. And their more distinct Understanding of each particular in their Baptismal Covenant, whether Articles necessary to be believ'd, or Duties to be practic'd, must be that which shall fit, and qualifie them for the farther Ratification, and frequent Renewing of the same Covenant in the Lord's Supper. When they shall have first learnt the Principles of the Doctrine of Christ, leaving them, they are to go on to Perfection.

And now I am to entreat the Candour of my Reverend Brethren, that however I may be mistaken in the Practicableness of this Design, as it is made subservient to the Raising of Catechetical Libraries for the poorer Parochial Clergy, they would believe I sincerely intend the Good of Souls, and the Honour of my Function in all that is here propos'd ; that I am so pressing, as for Parochial Libraries in the Plantations, so in the poorer Cures here at home, is, because as in the former, I know no good a Clergy that are not able to furnish themselves with Books in going over, can do in a Country where none are to be bought when

when they are there; so in the latter, no manner of Service to Religion, but the greatest Contempt and Mischief must fall both upon it, and our Clergy, to have any of our Order utterly ignorant in their own Profession, especially in so Learn'd and Inquisitive an Age as this.

But when I propose to lay the Foundation of *Catechetical Libraries* here at home, by the Sale of my own Book, this will need some Apology.

That I propose my own, it is not so, but that I do with all Humility submit it to the Judgment of my Superiors and Equals too, to accept it, or refuse it, and to substitute some other in its room, the Sale whereof may provide for the End propos'd. But that it ought to be some Book upon the Subject of our Baptismal Covenant as fittest to be the Subject of a Christian Institution for Youth, and indeed for a Family-Book, with submission to better Judgments I must insist, and I have these Reasons to offer for it. 1. As before, I take the Covenant of Grace, or our Baptismal Covenant to comprise the whole of Christianity, even all that, than which, no Man, as a true Christian, is necessitated to know more, and than which the meanest ought not to know less. No Man in any civil Contract can perform his Bonds, without knowing the Conditions of the Obligation; no more can a Christian be suppos'd to perform his Covenant with God, without knowing the Nature, Terms, and Conditions of it. 2. It

It is absolutely necessary, that all Youth should comprehend the General Nature, Terms, and Conditions of their *Baptismal Covenant* before they go to be Consecrated; and all Persons whatsoever before they receive the Holy Sacrament, because in both these Ordinances they enter their Vow with God. 4. And if in this Visitation of the Sick, the best Advice we can give a Person in that Condition, in order to prepare them for Death, is to Examine themselves concerning their Faith, and all and every the Terms, and Conditions of their part in their Baptismal Covenant. 5. And on the Day of Judgment the Process will run upon this, and they will be justify'd, or condemn'd, according to they have perform'd, or not perform'd their Covenant with God; I know no Scheme of Divine Providence for every private Christian to be oblig'd to this. And if moreover some *Excellible Discourses* for Families shall be added at the End of *Judas's Book*, I know nothing may bid more fairly for a proper Family Book, than one upon this Subject.

It may seem indeed that the Matter treated of in a *Discourse* of this Nature, may be above the Capacity of Youth. And I would fain know what *Grammatical* Instructions in other Sciences, are not so at first: But as often coming of Rules, and Terms of Art by degrees, lets gradually into their Minds that Knowledge, which will be useful to them all their Lives;

So here with a Hundred parts less Reading of a Book they will become perfect Masters of the whole Scope of these Christian Elements. And as for great Persons, as nothing is more familiar to them than the Notions about Covenants and Contracts, of sealing, and of the Obligations resulting therefrom, so I am perswaded their Capacities will soonest reach that Scheme of Christianity, which is deliver'd in those Forms, and under those Terms. And therefore, in compliance with the General Apprehensions of Men, it is to be suppos'd, that the Holy Spirit shall all along represent the Transactions between God and Man in the way of Covenant.

It is not indeed to be expected, that a Discourse of this Nature should descend to all the particular, and subdivided Terms of the Covenant, which Articles necessary to be believ'd, or Duties to be perform'd. No Elementary Institution of any Kind does that. But in a Discourse upon the General Doctrine of the Covenant betwixt God and Man, enter'd into in our Baptism, are laid down those great Strokes of Christianity, which are to be fill'd up afterwards by more particular Explications. And here the whole Scheme of saving Truths is to be laid down in an orderly Method, so that every Hearer of the Word of God may be able to refer what he shall at any Time hear or read in a desultory Manner to its proper Place, for want of which Skill, Christianity (though the most

most rational System of Verities in the World), seems to many to be a meer Huddle of Incoherent Principles, and Practices, whose End they know not, nor how wisely every thing in it is adapted to carry on that Noble End.

In short, as mere Zeal for the Service of Christ's Church, has excited me to leave no Stone unturn'd, to procure *Parochial Libraries* for our Protestant Missions into the Plantations; and I thank God with considerable good Success; so the same Passion for the Honour and Service of my Mother the Church, and the Power of my Brethren here at Home, has embolden'd me to attempt the like Design in their behalf; in which I hope I shall meet with Candour at least, if not with all the Success I could wish, from those to whom I have herein address'd.

F I N I S.

